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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
NSC FOR MGAVIN, LETIM  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/22

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SUBJECT: (U) Vice President Taha Tells Special Envoy Impasse on  
Census, Border Demarcation Broken

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert E. Whitehead, Charge d'Affaires; REASON:  
1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 21 meeting, Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha told Special Envoy Gration that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) parties had resolved the dispute over the census, giving the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) 40 additional seats, as well as an additional four in Southern Kordofan and two in Abyei, and had agreed on border demarcation. In Southern Kordofan, the census will be redone, and the state executive and legislative elections postponed until the new census is complete. The Government of National Unity will nominate a liaison to work directly with the Government of Chad, and the Sudan Minister of Defense and chief of Security will work with their counterparts in Chad to implement the new agreement between the two countries. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Special Envoy Gration met February 21 with Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha. Taha said that, following Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahuddin's successful visit to Chad, the GNU would nominate a liaison to work directly with the Government of Chad (GOC) to implement the agreement between the two countries, and would send the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Security to Doha to work directly with their counterparts on security arrangements.

¶3. (C) Asked his views as to how the various international actors, including the African Union (AU) High Level Panel headed by Thabo Mbeki, the UN and the UN-AU Joint Mediator Djibril Bassole, could work together, Taha responded that the parties need the support of the international partners in the economic development of Darfur, as well as in fostering the bilateral relationship between Sudan and Chad. Taha said the he envisioned cross-border development activities with Eastern Chad, to cement the relationship and to prevent security problems from arising again.

¶4. (C) Taha told Gration that in the census negotiation, the National Congress Party (NCP) offered the SPLM 40 additional seats in the National Assembly, as well as four in South Kordofan and two in Abyei. In addition, the Border Demarcation Commission had been given a directive to start demarcation working on the ground, and to provide a report to the Presidency in order to resolve areas on which there is disagreement. The parties want the border demarcation to be finished at least three months before the referendum.

¶5. (C) The Vice President said he had been in meetings on February 20 and 21 to discuss issues related to Southern Kordofan, where the SPLM threatened a boycott over the use of incomplete census figures. The parties have agreed to go forward with elections for the national executive and legislative branches, but to postpone the state legislative and executive elections.

¶6. (C) Taha said that the parties have directed their teams to start discussions on post-2011 arrangements. They will begin to decide the issues on which to ask for international community support on a case-by-case basis rather than having the international community present throughout, if the NCP gets its way.

¶7. (U) The Special Envoy's staff cleared this cable.  
WHITEHEAD